

The German Foundation: A Success for the Building of Europe
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If only by virtue of its actions since its establishment, the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility, and the Future" counts as a ringing success of the human spirit and of humanitarian outreach. So far, 750,000 claimants have received initial benefits totaling more than \$1 billion. The Foundation's total endowment of DM 10.1 billion -- plus the interest that endowment continues to earn -- mean that this important work has only just begun, and that the Foundation will remain an inspiring and important actor in Europe for years to come.

The Foundation is unique. Not only is it working actively to bring a measure of dignified justice to hundreds of thousands of victims of past injustices -- or to their heirs. It is also deeply engaged in the realization of a well-endowed "Future Fund," which will work to maintain global awareness of the dire consequences of repression, intolerance, and violent hatred. In other words, this praiseworthy institution, like the Europe in which it is embedded, looks backward to confront and mend injustice and forward to build tolerance, true security, and democracy. Nothing could better embody the aspirations we all share at this juncture. Nothing could be truer, or more intrinsic, to the aspirations of the trans-Atlantic Community as it launches on the bold construction of a Europe whole, free, and at peace.

It is worth exploring for a moment just how material this connection to our shared foreign policy goals has become. It is manifest that none of us can urge tolerance and pluralism on the people of Southeast Europe or on societies emerging elsewhere from undemocratic rule if we ourselves have not confronted unrighted wrongs of the past. Just as we have all maintained that there can be no lasting peace in the Balkans until all countries there have democratized, so the enlargement of NATO, the EU, and other institutions eastward cannot achieve its full potential until the old century's residue of injustice has been excised. No one can credibly talk of beginning a new millennium without actively extirpating the last vestiges of injustice and hatred from the past. The German people, German industry, and German leaders can justly take pride in this Foundation for its efforts to achieve these things.

But they can take pride also in the material contribution the Foundation is making to Europe's future. The historic processes of reconciliation in Europe have profited enormously from the Foundation's shining example. Germany's bold effort in this initiative to extend a generous hand to victims of National Socialism reaches out not only to Jewish and Roma claimants but also to Germany's neighbors--to Poland, to the Czech Republic, to Slovakia, to Hungary, and to Russia. This material witness to new bonds of friendship and common interest comes not despite the past but because of it--not in abstract anticipation of the future but decisively in order to build it. Germany and its neighbors come together in this act of reconciliation just as they come together in new partnerships--in NATO, in the NATO-Russia Council, in the European Union, and otherwise.

Over the past year, Germany and America have faced new and unexpected challenges and opportunities together. Recently, at the outset of a European tour, President Bush stopped in Berlin to continue the active dialogue and partnership which invigorates our common approach to change. It was fitting that, on the eve of a historic visit to Moscow for the purpose of binding the United States and Russia to dramatic nuclear reductions, the leaders of the United States and Germany should confer. They took the time not only to review our reconciliation with former eastern adversaries but also our common efforts to fight the scourge of terrorism.

The lesson we draw from this close cooperation is an old one, but one which we need to learn anew from time to time. That lesson is that what brings our peoples together is much more important than the things which seem sometimes to drive us apart. In our bilateral

partnership, as in the multilateral institutions we have jointly shaped, we are a community first and foremost of values. Our work together to make possible this Foundation is additional proof of that.

But let us make no mistake. This is a German--not a German-American Foundation. It is funded and managed by Germans of good will and good hearts. Credit must be paid where credit is due.

The American connection lies in the unique background of the Foundation's connection. Let me briefly explain. The primary wellspring of action in creating and maintaining the Foundation is and always has been its humanitarian task. It has also turned, however, on the diplomatic and legal construct of something called "all embracing legal peace." At its outset, this endeavor was unknown territory. We now have a couple of years of experience behind us. In principle, it amounts to a commitment on the U.S. side, where our bilateral Executive Agreement requires, to file Statements of Interest in U.S. courts seeking the dismissal of civil actions arising out of the Holocaust era. This is an obligation the United States takes extremely seriously, and I want to stress today that, under the current as under the previous Administration, U.S. officials have worked diligently to see that it is met.

The partnership behind the Foundation arises also from the extremely hard work of the teams which planned and negotiated to create it during many long months from 1999-2000. Many of the people who engaged in this important work are present with us today. Others, including Stu Eizenstat and J.D. Bindenagel on the U.S. side, and Count Lambsdorff and a host of German officials on the other, are not. To all who helped to achieve this, we owe a debt of gratitude. We owe it also to the professionals of victims' and survivors' organizations and to trial attorneys who helped to make this achievement possible -- especially those who signed the Joint Statement of July 17, 2000.

The work of the Foundation continues. The assiduous efforts of our two governments to make it a success continue also. Let us go forward in the knowledge that we have contributed materially to building a newer and better Europe, forging new and strong partnerships out of the tragedies of the past, providing a wonderful example for the new century. Thank you.